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that gives value to effort, shrinks and fades under the pitiless glare of a creed like this."

Such are, as it seems to us, the worst reefs athwart the track of the world's spiritual commerce in our day; such is our chart of the seas where they lie. Our review brings heartening along with soberness. Tenacious as mediæval gloom was, it did at last give way. The sources of culture gush perennially. If former checks upon their flow proved temporary, the present subsidence will be so,—the more certainly because of books and schools, instrumentalities once feeble, but now and always henceforth invincible.

In what quarter of the heavens dawn will first show, it were rash to predict. Socialism will run a long course, so will perverse education. There are happy signs that wealth-seekers are beginning to distinguish between wealth as a means and wealth as an end. Hardest to reform will doubtless be men's faith. Perhaps another Messiah will have to be awaited. Meantime, every child of the day may do somewhat to widen the skirts of light. As Emerson exhorts: "Bend to the persuasion which is flowing to you from every highest prompting of human nature to be its tongue to the heart of man and to show the besotted world how passing fair is wisdom."

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## ORIGINALITY AND CULTURE.

J. W. SCOTT.

WITH the progress of mechanical invention and the growing ease with which the material needs of man have come to be supplied, a great store of human energy and skill has been set free to spend itself on satisfying our higher human wants. These wants have had to be created. In a large extent they have been so; and, in-

dividually at least, they are tolerably supplied. But the coördination of these wants has not by any means kept pace with the awakening of them. And this fact has given to every phase of present-day life a certain distractedness of aspect. We are conscious of multitudinous wants without knowing their relative value. We lack a principle whereby to regulate their many claims. And the confusion intensifies the practical problem of life, right down through all classes of society. Even the humble economy of a working man's household is the meeting ground of an infinitely more complex set of forces than in the days when a hundred modern wants which now clamor for satisfaction, still slept in unconsciousness. In fact, the problem presented there gives us almost a miniature picture of the problem which civilization as a whole is tending to present. When the baffled old working man, struggling to reconcile himself to the ways of his growing family and provide for them, looks back wistfully to the time when no such thing as a bicycle or a country house was ever needed by people of his class, the real source of his trouble is a fear lest these new needs, rushing in, may crowd out other and more fundamental ones, or deprive them of their due and proper place. What he dreads is the confusion of his life's economy; the unloosing of that firm organic connection which once obtained between the different interests of his life. That dread is not, of course, always well founded. If life is ever to rise to a higher plane, it must be through such temporary disorder. Nevertheless, the disorder is real. And in it there is risk. The individual has cut his moorings and departed from the old safe ways of conducting life. He has given to new needs a legitimate voice. He has summoned them from the depths of unconsciousness, and having done so, he cannot lay them again. As a result he may rise to a higher life. If he succeeds in harmonizing them all, he will do so. On the other hand, if he fails, he sinks lower than he was. And it is gravely to be feared that, for the present at any rate, and on certain planes of our

civilization, the task is proving too much. Masses of our once thrifty poor are finding themselves so incessantly besieged by all manner of new conveniences, new opportunities, new interests and entertainments, that every need they are capable of feeling has been awakened; and the conflicting claims have become so difficult to adjust that many are practically giving up the task in despair and falling back on the policy of satisfying needs indiscriminately, as time and chance determine.

But the conditions do not affect the economic field only. The whole output of the world of culture,—literary work, artistic production, philosophic speculation, scientific discovery, even political and philanthropic endeavor,—seems equally to have outrun man's power to dispose of it. When the average educated individual allows himself to respond to the ideal forces of his time, when he sets himself to appreciate something of its art, follow the main trend of its politics, read its representative literature, he is very apt to become overwhelmed. He finds that those who act as the bearers of the higher culture to mankind, do not conspire together to win anything for him and present it to him as a whole. They are inspired men and women, audacious in their pioneering work, zealous to break new paths for mankind into a higher life. But they are not a band. Their enterprise is not one enterprise. They are broken up into a multiplicity of disconnected forces, each engrossed in its own work and proud of any fragment of truth or of beauty which it may have been able to capture. There seems to be no real supplementation of one part of the work by another. The individual looks in vain for any extensive corroboration of the one bit of truth, or any adequate setting for the fragment of beauty. He thus misses the inspiring sense of a goal,—a whole of life which the entire enterprise might have been gradually revealing to him. He finds himself in a universe of contradictions, where he no sooner commits himself to one line of thought or standard of beauty than he runs against some other with, apparently, an

equal claim to his allegiance. He is, in fact, in the same distracted state as the baffled manager of the modern household confronting his conflicting claims. He is in a universe to which he cannot adjust himself because it is itself incoherent. Nor is it his own fault that he is in this position. He has not, any more than the working man, entered into this self-discrepant, distracted universe capriciously. No one who really lives can be out of it. No one can be wholly oblivious to what the ideal tendencies of his time are offering him. Rumors which live in the air he breathes, force the individual to hear what politicians are planning, or artists producing, or theologians arguing about. And to listen is *ipso facto* to acquire interests. Every faintest echo which succeeds in attracting his attention runs its chance of setting up a permanent interest in itself,—leaving some trace upon him of a desire to hear more about it or understand it better. To be educated, in fact, means to have one's susceptibilities to such things awakened, and, once awakened, they are not to be lulled to sleep again.

This inability to get above the details of life has its most sinister outcome in the way it changes our standards of value. In the first place it prevents our interest in any activity being really deep. There are too many kinds of activity. Or rather, the kinds are too different. The plentitude of intellectual and artistic endeavor which civilization is presenting to us, lacks organic connection. There is no one goal to it, no end, however faint or far away, in which we might take an absolute interest; nothing towards which all the elements bend their strength; nothing of which we can say: this is that 'higher life' which all our efforts are meant to secure. We thus cannot ask seriously about any pursuit we take up, what is the ultimate point of it? We are forced to turn aside from the question of ultimate values altogether. Either we must lose our interest in life, or we must learn to be content with interests less complete. We have to become engrossed in the particulars and details of our occupation,

and cease to reflect on its ultimate purpose. We must cease to dwell upon what our work is in the long run, or what it means to the world, and find what satisfaction we can in the mere fact that it occupies us. Thus there becomes fixed for us a standard of value. We appreciate work, whether our own or that of others, according to its power to occupy or arrest attention. We measure the writer or artist not by the content of his message, but by the piquancy or novelty of his manner of bringing it. We lay emphasis not on the universal, but on the individual; we value "the peculiar impression, the individual tone, the subjective, personal hue." Give this tendency free scope and the warping of our practical ideals is the result. The number of interesting pursuits or objects in the world becomes as endless as our interest in each is shallow. Whatever can strike a new note, offer a fresh idea, provide the entertainment of an hour, is admitted to a place among the worthy occupations of man; until when one is seeking an aim for one's own life, the generous impulses die and the selfish ones take their place. Devotion to an objective cause gives place to the mere ambition to make one's mark, to do something special, striking, distinctive; something which can be called one's own and which will compel attention. We cease to aim at getting work done, and begin to aim at making ourselves interesting.

We have been trying to bring into view one of those broad, pervasive ideals which move over the whole surface of our social life, and whose influence in molding thought and conduct is all the greater because it is so silent and unobserved. Far more people aim at being great, than are aware that they do so. And we have been trying to exhibit the logic whereby the present extraordinary accumulation of the elements of culture has issued in giving a certain bias to our conception of human greatness. Our next task is to examine the validity of the conception as thus modified.

In the first place, conditions are to be found, and some-

times in very unlikely places, fitted to encourage another and a very different conception. In the commercial and industrial world, the clash of competition tells us very plainly the value of being distinctive; how important it often is to the business man to be able to escape the overcrowded lines and strike out with something fresh. His whole life, even, seems at times to be but one long effort to attain the unique,—to find some new human need he can supply, or whim he can pamper, some new salable article or new way of producing the old article,—at any rate, to find some means or other of being the only one of his class and doing what no one else is doing. And so far, he seems to be aiming at the kind of greatness we have delineated above. Yet even in the business world itself the mere determination to stand for one thing and abjure all contact with everything else is not sufficient. The concatenation of economic conditions is so close, the ties between one business interest and another are so vital, that the individual must at least keep up an intelligent interest in other 'lines' than his own. He must see his own position. He must understand what his particular product does to supply human need as a whole, on what the demand for it depends, what its real place is in the complex circulation of human products. He must be able to step back from his specialty, so to speak, and 'envisage' it in its context; otherwise he will be able to foresee neither advantage nor disaster. And this function, if we think of it, will be seen to be the pursuit of an ideal, which is the very reverse of a deification of mere distinctiveness. It is, in embryo, the ideal of culture. Culture, in the genuine classic sense of the term, is simply the ability to transcend specialized interests and bring them into their true perspective. It is the ability to set the obtrusive elements of our life back into their place, deprive them of their false importance and bring the really greater things into the centre. And the mere effort of a man to bring the economic conditions of the time before his mind in their true relations for the sake

of his business, carries him some way towards this. It is an effort to make a coherent self-explaining world, out of a confusion of forces whose special incidence upon his own life is largely a matter of accident and is out of all proper relation to their real importance in the objective whole which they constitute.

It would be easy to show that conditions also exist which impel a man further, and towards a fuller realization of what we have called the ideal of culture. The individual is not himself a mere bundle of disconnected interests. He is a personality. He has an impulse towards wholeness in him which demands to see the whole interests of man, political, social, artistic, religious, in their true perspective. But this demand, by reason of certain native human tendencies, is always hard to fulfil. The first essential to its fulfillment, under any circumstances, is a certain self-sacrifice. The individual must commit himself to the world. He must recognize from the outset that he is only a learner, and that the world is full of wiser men than he. He must be quick to avail himself of these, eager to accept teaching from any of them who have anything to teach him. Especially should he study the history of the past, and endeavor to come under the influence of teachers of other ages than his own. He should let himself be influenced and guided by the great souls who have made out their title to be the teachers of our race. Only in this way can he find wisdom at the fountain head, and enter into his spiritual inheritance.

I have said that we have a native unwillingness to abandon ourselves to the larger current of the world's culture. Now, at first sight, reflection rather seems to justify such a tendency. For grant that what we have just said about the ideal of culture is true,—that its essence lies in wide acquaintance with the facts of the world, that the need of it is native to the mind of man, that the beginnings of a call for it are traceable deep down in the workaday world of industry and busi-



ness competition. Is there not another need, equally deeply rooted in the soil of modern life, of whose existence business specialization is itself a symptom, namely the need for what is called originality? Is it not just the necessity for new things, and for bringing the things we already need up to a new standard of efficiency, which has made us specialize, and which is constantly driving us on to specialize further? And if the search for the unique and special characterizes the industrial world, is it not a fact that the same tendency governs the literary and artistic world even more? And have we not to reckon with that fact? There probably never was a time when the whole range of human susceptibilities was more thoroughly ransacked for new wants, new interests, new literary and artistic tastes. We cannot be indifferent to these demands. Not bread and butter only, but to some extent culture itself depends on our power to minister to them. It is expected of the man of culture that he will be able to set truth in striking lights and awaken new ideas. It is part of his business to be original. Now, surely, to let oneself be influenced by other minds, even by the master minds of all time, will be to endanger this originality. In occupying ourselves with their ideas we shall lose our own. We shall have to be content to reflect their wisdom, to shine as it were in a borrowed light. Such a practice, it might be said, may do little harm in some cases. It may work very well with those in whom originality does not count, those who have nothing to do but work on given methods or teach accepted doctrines. But for anyone so placed that he must before all things bring to his work the force of an original personality, it would seem to mean irreparable loss. In short, if a man has any original ideas, the counsel of wisdom is that he should guard them. Let him not go and steep his mind in the thoughts of others unless he wants to be their mouth-piece. He will lose his personality in that fashion. He will no longer be an individual by himself, with whom the world has to reckon, but simply one of the crowd, whose

mind is swayed by ideas which are the world's, and which are the instruments whereby the world molds the crowd into their common shape.

This, then, is the kind of theory whereby the conditions which already make so powerfully for the worship of mere distinctiveness come to be intellectually reinforced. Is it tenable? In the first place, there should be no delusion as to the importance of personality. The need for that is not confined to some walks of life only, but is found practically everywhere. It is the biggest asset with which a man can enter the business world, and a literateur or an artist without it is probably a failure from the beginning. The only question is whether what we call culture,—the practice of assiduously acquainting ourselves with what other minds have thought and felt,—will be injurious to it. And it seems to me that we are beating the air in this matter until we gain some clear idea of what personality and originality are,—what it is to be original and to be a person.

When I look to the world's brightest examples of original genius, so far from finding that that submissive, receptive attitude of mind,—that willingness to accept the guidance and wisdom of the great past which we have spoken about,—was injurious to them, I seem to find that it was just what made them. A man's personality is a thing which needs to be made. He does not bring it full fledged into the world with him. Strange as it may seem, personality is a thing which a man absorbs from his environment as a plant absorbs air and light. He acquires it, little by little, out of the common storehouse of the world's wisdom. The elements out of which he builds it are gathered from all lands and all ages. He did not create any one of them. They were there already in the world before he was born. In him they are only brought together. We are all plagiarists. In the last resort everything we have or know is borrowed.

This truth is not very difficult to admit in the case of common men and women. When we look at a great

original genius, however, we are apt to think that he is an exception. What we see first in him is not his debt to the past but his independence of it. This first view is not all wrong. The original genius *is* different from the people who surround him. He is a man whose ideas are his own and who takes his own way. He stands out *against* his own time, holds startling opinions, does unusual deeds. His generation does not understand him, and he may even have to pay the tragic penalty of it,—be hated, ostracized, imprisoned, even done to death. But there is a further truth. After we have seen all that can be seen of his difference from others, we have not yet seen the real man. If we look but a little closer, we shall find that, despite the widest gulf which severs the man of genius from common men, there is between him and them a unison of spirit more profound and real than they know; and it is this which makes him great. It is his real oneness with men's own inner souls which makes them feel his power. This it is which makes his words come home to them whether they will or not, and makes them feel that he is right even while they try to disbelieve him. In the long run, the power of the genius over his less enlightened brethren rests on the fact that he and they are built of the same material. He knows what they know, has been where they have been, has learnt all that they have learnt, *and outreaches them*. He turns out to be different from them, not because he belongs to some other world or other order of things, but simply because he has learnt better than they what they too have tried to learn. That apparently most preposterous view which he thinks right, is just what his generation would have seen to be right, had they learnt well their own lessons. They have but to read back their own history, listen to their own teachers, copy their own heroes as deeply and truly as he has done, to see that his policy, his theory, his style or method was the right one. That rebellion of his against the past was really what all the past had been waiting for, had people only had eyes to

see. The proof of all which is that they come to see,—they, or their children. Tardily, one after another, the great man's contemporaries and successors *come* to understand him,—yield to follow in his footsteps, accept his reading of things, embrace his despised and rejected message as a very gospel, and raise their altars to the prophet they have stoned.

Personality, then, whether of a great man or of any one of ourselves, is simply so much of the wisdom of the world brought into the focus of an individual life. The elements of it lie, so to speak, diffused all about us, in books, in teachers, in the political and moral and religious usages of our time, in the traditions we inherit, in the habits we form, in the language we learn, in the whole social atmosphere which envelops us. And just because these common influences are the very material of our personality, personality itself is no such unintelligible thing as it is sometimes represented to be. A man's personality is not some peculiar treasure in his breast, some mysterious flickering flame of inward fire which he can only describe in metaphors, and which he must set about trying to 'cultivate' before he can possess it. To cultivate personality is of course a laudable aim. What one wants to condemn are only the strange misconceptions which gather round the endeavor. It is not a process of morbidly groping in the entrails of one's own mind, feeling about for some impalpable elusive something which very likely isn't there. Personality *is* just one's centralized experience of the world, and there is no way of making it greater except by making that experience greater and more centralized, in other words, being a bigger, broader, better man or woman. Every intellectual achievement, every moral victory, every bit of solid work, will leave personality richer, profounder, more delicate. In fact, to cultivate it, the plan is don't cultivate it. Let it alone and do your duty and it will grow.

The function of the great, then, is to fulfill both the

present and the past. But is it any use to try thus to follow in the footsteps of the great in an age when greatness does not thrive? For at the present moment we look around in vain for examples of greatness of the highest type. To say, in fact, that the output of the products and means of the higher culture is becoming too much for us, is just to say in other words that we lack great men. The function of the great man is to preserve us from being thus overwhelmed. The universe pours out upon us, through a thousand natural and human channels, its mass of conflicting truths and tangled purposes, with which we must try as best we can to reckon, seeing we have to live with them. The great man comes to our aid in these circumstances with that which we most of all need, namely, a point of vision. He leads us through the confusion to a position from which at length we can see something in it, or rather to a position from which we can see the whole of it, to *be* something. He gives us ideas of such depth and such universal applicability, that in their light we are able to test new theories, evaluate new movements, set in order new facts and events, and deal with the whole baffling inundation. The confused babel of tongues evolves itself into an articulate story, and the world gradually acquires some meaning again. Now there is, indeed, at the present time the field which would provide scope for people with such ideas. But though there are, at the moment, men and women who exert most widespread influence, no leading mind seems really to fill the arena. However impressive the following of some leaders or movements may be when seen in the mass and seen from within, they inevitably appear insignificant when set against the depth of indifference towards the particular persons or causes, exhibited by the rest of the intelligent world. We lack leaders who really find the common heart of our time,—to whose touch the age will respond as a whole, in the way the nineteenth century responded to some of its great poets and preachers. It is not of course a simple question of the numerical

strength of a man's following. If it were, writers like Ibsen or Tolstoy or Nietzsche might possibly enough rank with Goethe and Carlyle and Ruskin. It is a question of character,—of the degree to which the audience swayed by a writer are representative, and sum up in themselves the ripest experience of their time. Present-day movements, even the greatest of them, seem to propagate views of life too narrow, too intense, and too different from one another, for the age to have been touched at its deepest and in its centre by any one of them. They illuminate sections of life, cast flash-lights of amazing brilliancy upon aspects of the universe; but their power to illuminate these aspects is got by neglecting other spheres. Why, then, in such circumstances, should we care to institute any quest for the whole? Is it not all we can do, in an age like ours, to discover and experiment, to throw out feelers in all directions, and do that over all fields of human enterprise? Is it not our business often, too, to labor in the dark; and may we not even accomplish our best work, like Cromwell, when we do not know whither we are going? It is unavoidable that during such a period much should be produced which no one could set in vital relation to any whole, and of which the great man can make no use. But is it not worth while taking this simply as the hazard of the game?

The answer seems to be that the business of an age which lacks great men is to prepare for their coming. And for this it is not merely material that is required, but prepared material. Obviously the less of sheer waste there is in a people's efforts after higher things, the better it will be. And it is possible for a people to squander its energies and swell the amount of useless thought and merely eccentric culture to an unnecessary degree, under the influence of a false ideal. On that account, the point here urged is of perhaps more than merely academic importance,—the point, namely, that even amidst the present disposition to emphasize the intense, the personal, the novel, the best is only to be reached by seeking what is

not merely intense, but comprehensive, not merely personal, but human, not merely novel, but true. To guide thought and life thus, is to exhibit in concrete form the faith which sees in the present distraction of culture not the symptoms of decay, but the condition of advance. The great of the future, if such there are to be, will inherit from the great of the past. And the material of the present will be the binding link. They will be made possible, therefore, in just the degree to which we grasp the actual material of our own life and form it. In a word, we must, in whatever exploration or pioneering we do, endeavor to let our work be the centre of as much as possible; and refuse to let that pass for work whose affinity with life is narrow and whose range of influence is small. We shall not suffer for that. After all, the total measure of our human good is the amount of life we possess. Our vessel will be full in proportion as we succeed in placing ourselves where the streams of human interest converge. In their own day, the great of the past stood there. And the position we seek, must lie in their direction. It may be more advanced than theirs; it may be in a hundred ways different; but if we are either to be ourselves in the really rich veins of life, or to leave for the great who are to come the material which they can use to the salvation of the world, we must stand in the same line.

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## THE IDENTITY OF THE IDEALS.

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THE thesis of this paper is that the ideals of life,—of truth and beauty and virtue,—are identical as regards form or the demands which they set to the concrete will. The difference in our ideal activities lies, not in their form, but in the specific end in which human nature